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ABSTRACT

This document focuses on the use of puppets for educating the illiterate populations of the world in food production and family planning. It is presented as one practical and effective tool for the adult educator and literacy worker. When used as part of a total program of functional literacy for family life planning, it can help young adults gain a wider understanding of population problems and of the options available to them if they wish to limit the size of their families. The play, "Small Family, Happy Family," can be translated into any language. (CK)

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Puppets and Population

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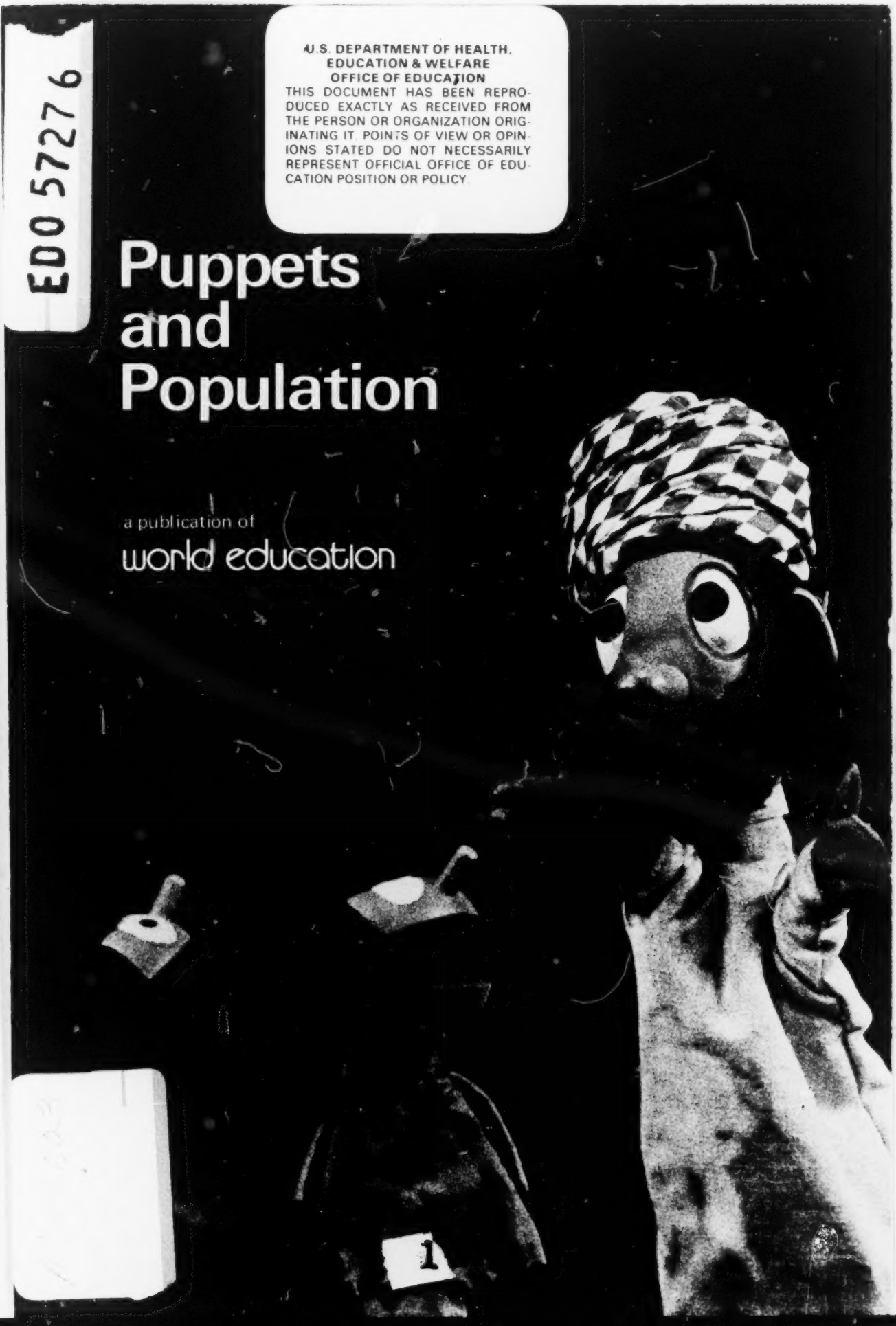

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Foreword

Since 1951, World Education has been involved in what we term "functional education" for adults. In recent years, we have focused on literacy programs related to food production and family planning—those fields we believe to be most crucial to individual and national development.

At Literacy House in India (with which World Education has been associated for many years) we learned long ago that effective learning is most likely to occur when educational opportunity intersects with vital daily concerns. Hence our literacy materials, starting with the primer, have centered on subject matter that the villager cares about: his crops, his family's health, the legends of his people, means of acquiring marketable skills. Today, one of the things that most concerns the villager, wherever he may be, is how to achieve a better life for his family. Functional education for family life planning, therefore, is a logical choice for World Education involvement.

The illiterate adult has problems of perception. It is difficult for him to attribute meaning to symbols. We have helped him grapple with the printed word by providing a great variety of audio-visual

aids, from wall newspapers, simple flannel graphs, flip charts and posters, to inexpensive battery-operated tape recorders and slide projectors with easy-to-produce film strips. We are beginning to look ahead to the day when satellites will bring television into remote villages, and enormous quantities and varieties of new educational materials will be needed.

Over the years some of the audio-visual devices that we have tried we have had to discard as not feasible for one reason or another. Throughout our experimentation, however, puppets have remained. Puppetry, like other aids, is only one tool for adult literacy educators. It functions as a supplementary teaching instrument in the difficult process of communicating new ideas and information to young adults with low literacy levels. Like the others it can teach, provide continued information support, and help motivate.

Puppetry, however, has some additional advantages. People are more willing to accept a new idea if it comes from a trusted source. Therefore, where puppetry has a strong cultural tradition it can be particularly effective. Further, the difficulties that many persons with low literacy levels experience in perceiving and interpreting symbols, graphs, or cartoons do not seem to arise with puppetry. And finally puppetry is flexible and adaptable, and hence uniquely suited to the special problems of family planning education.

We do not expect puppetry to do the job alone. Ideally the puppet play published here, or any play on the subject, will be presented in the context of a literacy/family planning/population education program. The production of this puppet play will only be one aspect of a program of instruction that will incorporate family life planning information at every stage of functional literacy training.

Nor do we mean to suggest that either the world's problems or the individual's problems will all be solved if only families become smaller in size. Problems of health, of environment, of economics, of values will remain and must be tackled simultaneously. The

crucial problem of population must be solved, however, and puppetry as a part of a family life education program can help.

The particular play printed here (Bil Baird's "Small Family, Happy Family") has Indian characters and setting, but is designed for easy adaptation to various languages, cultures and regions. It is illustrative of the ways in which puppetry can be used effectively as an educational aid in literacy-family planning programs. In some parts of the world, especially in those countries such as Indonesia or Turkey which have an established puppet tradition, audiences may be more responsive to another play altogether, one whose techniques, characters, and themes are already familiar.

In Turkey, for instance, Bil Baird decided not to translate this play but to adapt a script involving the traditional (and ribald) Turkish puppet characters, Karagöz and Hajivat. The puppeteers used their traditional shadow puppets, seen in profile, and the play was performed on a stage especially designed to be viewable by large audiences. (It drew some 15,000 persons at the 1970 Izmir Fair.) So the working drawings of the stage that are included in this book, and the instructions for making glove puppets, are also intended to be, primarily, suggestive of the possibilities of this singularly adaptable medium.

Whether this play is used, or some other, the specific family planning content of the Modules will remain useful and valid. (See pages 24-25 and pages 61-73).

We are grateful to numerous population program workers for their advice in preparing this booklet, and particularly to the Population Council for its encouragement in the whole project and its assistance in developing the stage and the play script.

But above all we wish to thank Bil Baird, a trustee of World Education. Twice Bil has been to India on missions for us and once to Turkey. He is a special kind of person as well as one of the world's master puppeteers. He cares about "the quality of human life," to borrow his phrase, and that concern shines through everything he touches. On each trip everyone he met was galvanized to admiration and to action—literacy educators, family

planners, bureaucrats, puppeteers, and of course audiences. This booklet is the latest of his continuing contribution to educational puppetry.

"Puppets and Population" is presented as one practical and effective tool for the adult educator and literacy worker. When used as part of a total program of functional literacy for family life planning, it can help young adults gain a wider understanding of population problems and of the options available to them if they wish to limit the size of their families. In this context, we believe that this booklet will be a useful guide to the art of persuasive puppetry.

Thomas B. Keehn
Executive Vice-President
World Education, Inc.

I. Why Puppets?

In the alleyways of big cities around the world and in the tiny lanes of remote villages, the basic message is getting across: there are too many people in the world, more people than the land can hold. There are too many mouths to feed; our cities are becoming unliveable. We must slow down, or call a halt.

The word is beginning to be heard, yet no one quite knows how to take the next step. We believe that puppetry can help.

To some, the use of puppets to carry the crucial message about family planning may seem an unlikely choice. Puppets are for entertainment.

Puppets do entertain. And puppets can also instruct. Puppets have been used to teach mathematics, literacy, French, child care and space technology.

For those who care about the quality of human life, however, what is perhaps most significant is that puppets, in addition to teaching and entertaining, can help change attitudes, and can move people to action.

At Literacy House in Lucknow, India, puppetry has been used for many years as a literacy teaching tool but also, more

importantly, as an instrument for social change. In an Indian village some years ago 403 people lined up to be vaccinated after they had witnessed a puppet play about the dangers of smallpox.

Will hundreds and thousands line up to talk to family planning health workers just because they have begun to learn to read, and because having seen a puppet play on family planning as a part of a literacy-population program, they have gained some understanding of the problem? Probably not immediately. But puppetry as part of a well-planned community health and education program can help the villager move through the process of adopting a new idea.

We use puppets in functional literacy/family planning programs for the same reason that people have used puppets all over the world since the beginning of time. Puppets can go anywhere, and puppets can say anything—well, almost anything.

The Puppet Has No Self

Puppets have no ego.

Perhaps this is the reason that we can, with puppets, tackle more delicate subjects than we can with live actors. Puppets seem to be able to say things to an audience and get away with it in a way that people cannot. When a speaker talks, and even when an actor performs, he is questioned as to who he is, why he is there, why he knows so much more than anyone else, who has hired him to speak. The puppet seems to be immune to this kind of questioning.

Puppetry is Adaptable

One of the great things about puppetry is its flexibility. Unlike a movie, a cartoon, or a written document, details of wording or of situation can be changed again and again, even at the very last moment.

It can play to an illiterate audience or an educated one, and be beneficial to both and enjoyed by both.

Most puppet plays are not final finished products, but skeletons. They become effective instruments, either for entertainment or for instruction, only when they have been adapted to suit the locale where they are being played. This every puppeteer has known, down through the ages and across the world.

It was the habit of the old travelling puppet shows in Germany to send a man on a day ahead, an advance-man, to learn what he could about the people in the little towns in the Black Forest where they were to play. By the time the show got there it was topical and very personal. The puppeteers knew the name of the blacksmith and the baker. They knew the foibles of the mayor and his wife. All of this was woven into the puppet show.

We can do the same with this play. We can adapt it, translate it, and take it to different groups with different attitudes all over the world. If it were rigid and unchangeable, in many cases it would not fit. Every nation, every state, even every little village has its own particular problems, its own customs and mores, its own likes and prejudices—especially on a subject as personal and as delicate as family planning.

Puppets Can Go Anywhere

You can take a puppet show to a village without electricity, and set it up on a moment's notice. You can show it indoors or outdoors. You can perform during the day or at night. You can play to a small audience or a large one. It is not unknown for a puppet show to play before audiences of 5,000 or 6,000. This particular show, however, will probably play more effectively before a smaller audience, and a selected one.

There are ways of limiting the audience size. You can perform in a place in the village—a courtyard or a square, for instance—where space is limited. You might want to do it inside if there is a hall available and a small group of concerned people. If the

production is part of a course in literacy and family planning, the literacy teachers will, of course, already be familiar with the script. But perhaps the village leaders should also preview it. You might want to do two or three shows in one evening, showing it first to a group of men, then women, then married couples.

Any puppet show, and this one is no exception, can be done with an elaborate production or a simple one. The puppets can be professionally made, or they can be simply constructed from materials at hand. This booklet includes instructions for making simple glove puppets from papier-mache, which have been successfully developed at Literacy House. (See Appendix I, How To Make A Simple Glove Puppet). Of course if your puppeteers are already skilled in shadow puppets or marionettes, they will use those.

The lighting equipment can be as basic as a couple of large torches (flashlights), Coleman lamps, or a string of light bulbs, or as elaborate as the most sophisticated stage lighting.

The stage, too, can be improvised easily, by stretching a sheet between two pillars or upended chairs. A bed can be set on its side, with the puppeteers seated behind it. Details on how to build a special stage designed for this show, or any show that will travel a lot, are given in Appendix II. It has many advantages and is recommended to you.

II. The Community Gets Into the Act

The puppet play included in this booklet, "Small Family, Happy Family," is one example of a teaching tool to let villagers know that they can limit their families and that they will have a better life by having small families. It gets across the idea that family planning is a subject that they can talk about, even joke about.

It also informs the members of the audience that there are many ways of limiting their families, depending on their age, their physical condition, the size of their families, their responsibilities to family members, and the birth control methods presently available. It gives them an idea of how birth control methods work, and advises them to seek individual professional advice. We hope the play will also amuse and entertain them.

A performance of the puppet play alone is not enough for a community to understand, accept, and act upon a new idea like family planning. The performance is only the central section of a three part process. The other two parts, preparation and follow-up, are just as important to the overall success of a program.

The Preparation

The first stage in planning is to choose the community where the play will be put on. The sponsoring group will want to send ahead someone knowledgeable about the project and about family planning: a trained family planning worker or a doctor or nurse. This person should visit the village at least a day or two ahead of time, preferably a week in advance.

He needs to know the history of family planning in this community. Perhaps a family planning clinic has already been established where information and services are available. Perhaps there is a literacy class where family planning and population information have been incorporated into the curriculum. He should talk to the workers at the clinic; he should enlist the support of the village teacher. This will help him determine how receptive villagers may be to the theme of the play.

He should then find out what community resources are available that could be involved in the project. He will want to find out who the village leaders are, and take care to enlist their support. He should ask their advice and help in planning the performance. These leaders should sponsor the performance.

No really influential group should be omitted from your plans. Begin with the village headman and go on to other opinion makers. Mrs. Welthy Fisher, the founder of Literacy House in Lucknow, India, has always advised that if you would achieve social change, "Find the strong woman of the village. If she is with you, you succeed. If she is against you, you fail." So search her out, and talk with her. Certainly with family planning it is the women who will make the ultimate decision. But the district commissioner, the health officer and others should be added to the list.

What about the midwives? Childbirth is their business. If anyone has a vested interest in babies, it is the midwife. She must be convinced that family planning in the village is to her advantage. If funds permit, reward her for each woman she brings to the clinic. If possible, train her, and make her a paid assistant in the clinic.

All of these people should help determine when the play is to be given, and with what emphasis. The script offers a choice of six "Modules" to insert in the play, depending on which method of family planning is most suitable in a particular area. There may be other things about the play that should be changed. For instance, in some communities the play may be more effective if the two men are friends, rather than brothers. Accept guidance on these matters from village leaders.

In addition to suggestions about the play itself, the leaders of the community will help you to decide a number of other things. Can the women be approached in a literacy class? Can they be examined by a doctor? Male or female? Will there have to be separate performances for men and women or can they watch it together? Will the distribution of contraceptive devices have to be done individually in private, or can groups of women come together to the clinic?

The local leaders, the staff of the local family planning clinic, the village worker, the midwives, the teacher, the doctor—if there is one—all must be asked to help plan the event. Their cooperation will make the work of the puppeteers easier, and is in fact essential for the success of the project.

Maybe the audience is not yet ready to see this play. You may need to spend more time in preparation. If a literacy class has been organized, perhaps it is not yet far enough along in its understanding of the problem. You may want your puppeteers to do a different kind of play first, a more general one on the advantages of family planning. If the community has electricity you may be able to arrange a showing of the Walt Disney film, *Family Planning*. It has been translated in 25 languages and is probably available from the Health Ministry, the United States AID Mission, or a local family planning organization.*

*For information about securing the film, write to The Population Council, 245 Park Avenue, New York, New York 10017, USA.

So much for preparation. You should now have the necessary community support and the specific information about family planning methods and services to include in the play. Then comes the night of the performance itself. If th planning has been carefully done, and the performance was lively, community interest should be high.

Follow-Up

Follow-up is necessary to sustain the interest generated by the play. It begins on the night of the show. Every time the play is performed there must be a specialist on family planning to accompany the play. He (or she) should be listed in the Cast of Characters with the play. He is as important a part of the show as Lal, or the goat, or the children. He is there to answer questions, to give concrete, factual information and advice, and to distribute birth control devices. It might be a good idea to include a family planning expert from the local clinic, if there is one. Page 26 suggests various ways to get questions and a discussion started at the end of the performance. Even if this fails, and it may in certain situations, still the audience must be assured that there are answers, and they are readily available.

There should also be simply written free pamphlets to give to the audience. These should give specific information about local services: where they are, what they are, their cost, and methods available.

The village clinic or the mobile family planning clinic should be open immediately after the performance and on the following day, and if possible for at least a week thereafter.

Do not feel that the performance is a failure if there are not long lines of villagers ready to talk with the family planning worker on the night of the performance. This is part of an educational process, and the process cannot be forced. People learn things in their own time. The questions raised by "Small

Family, Happy Family" take time to mull over. The decision, for instance, to have a vasectomy, will be reached only after long and careful consideration. The audience will want to think it over. Wives will want to talk to husbands, consult with elder members of the family, ponder about it for a while.

If there has been some public discussion generated by this play, it will be easier for the village people to talk to one another and to ask professional help. This is one reason that you are urged to encourage questions at the end of the play even if they do not seem to lead anywhere at the moment.

It will help, of course, if everyone connected with the project is free and easy in talking about family planning. All of the staff, including the puppeteers, may have to spend some time educating themselves.

The third step then will not all happen in one day. This is the reason that the follow-up is as important as the preparation and as the performance itself. In the following days and weeks, every effort should be made to have information and assistance readily available, to aid people in the process of adopting family planning.

The important thing to remember is that this play—or any play on family planning aimed at persons of limited reading ability—will be most effective if it is incorporated as a part of a functional education program.

19 [illegible]

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III. Bil Baird Speaks to the Puppeteers*

You have to be a little bit peculiar to be a puppeteer. I should know because I have spent the better part of fifty years at it. The work is hard and never seems to end; the hours are long and irregular; the pay is usually poor. We travel a lot, sleep in strange beds, and never have the time we would like to spend with our wives and children. It is not enough that we learn to manipulate our puppets. We must be sculptor, actor, playwright, dancer, stagehand, carpenter, electrician, singer, and accountant. And nobody takes us very seriously.

But you and I know that it is the only work for us. There is something very satisfying about building one's own small world and stocking it with the creatures of our own imagination. We work, sometimes for weeks, on a character, molding it, constructing it, making it move the way we want it to, getting a little piece of business—the flip of a monkey's tail, for instance—just right.

* To be translated into the puppeteers' language.

But when it works, when we are crouched in the dark below the stage or pulling the strings from above, and out there in front, their faces blurred in the dim light reflected from the stage, the audience responds, then there is a kind of magic. This is our doing, and it is good. This is why we are puppeteers.

Most of us think of ourselves as entertainers. We know that we can move an audience to laughter or tears, and usually that is enough for us.

Some of us do a lot more than entertain, however, without even thinking about it. In many parts of the world we pass the great legends of our people from one generation to the next. In some places the puppeteer is also a spiritual teacher, almost a priest. We are storytellers and we are teachers.

When man started his explorations of outer space, the great television networks of American experimented with all kinds of techniques to explain to their vast audiences the very complex scientific adventure that was taking place. They used learned commentators and photographs and charts, and drawings, and cartoons, and movies. They interviewed the astronauts and the scientists and the technicians. They had actors dress up in the astronauts' garb and go through the motions in the studio that the real astronauts would be going through in space. All of it helped explain what was going on. But not until they turned to puppets did it really become clear.

I am proud to have a part in bringing that story to the millions who watched all over the earth.

We puppeteers have an important job to do now—a job I think we can do better than anyone else. It is to tell the people that it is better for them, for their country, and for the whole world if they keep their families small; and then show them how they can do it.

It is not an easy job, and we cannot do it alone, nor should we try. You may find it hard yourself to talk, even through puppets, about a subject as intimate and personal as family planning. That is why you must not try to produce the play until you have yourself talked to the family planning workers about it and

understand the birth control methods that this play presents, and feel comfortable using the language.

This play is very specific. It tells the audience medical facts about their own bodies that they may not know. That is the reason why it is very important that this play be offered after the audience is properly prepared. This may take two or three days, or two or three weeks. The village worker, the medical officer, the family planning expert must have spent some time talking with the village leaders, with the women, and perhaps with the school teachers.

It might be a good idea before you do this play to present one that speaks only in a very general way about the desirability of small families. You may already have such a play in your repertoire, or perhaps you will want to write one yourself. Many such plays exist. If you have trouble finding a good one that seems right for your locality, write to us at World Education, and we will try to help you.

"Small Family, Happy Family" was designed to be shown as a part of a literacy and family planning education project. If the members of your audience have started to learn to read, they will already know something about family planning, and they will understand the play better.

In any case, there should always be a family planning expert standing ready tc answer questions on the night of the performance. Don't let anyone try to talk you into doing this alone. It won't work. If there is no family planning worker available that night, and no clinic setup to which your audience can go that night and the following day, then this is not the play to use.

When you and the village worker are convinced that there is an audience ready to hear the message of this play, then you will want to start to rehearse. Be sure you get a good translation. Make sure that the words sound right. Change the names of the characters so they are familiar to the audience. Maybe you will want to go along with the community worker to talk with the local people. If you have their help in planning the performance, your job will be easier.

After you have played several performances, I am sure you will find that there are revisions you want to make. Anyone who is in the theater anywhere in the world knows that after three or four performances you find that there are some things that work, and some that just don't. I would like to hear from you about the reactions you find. If there are changes that I can incorporate so that it will play better everywhere, then we all benefit.

Next time I get to go on a world tour I hope that I can visit many of you, and see your performance of "Small Family, Happy Family." In the meantime, you can write to me at the following address.

World Education
667 Madison Avenue
New York, N. Y. 10021
United States of America

Good luck with it, and have fun!

Bil Baird

IV. The Performance

Universality of the Play

The basic human qualities of "Small Family, Happy Family" give it a universality that makes it playable almost anywhere. This particular version was designed to be translated into Hindi or Punjabi and performed in Hindu villages in northern India. Let us, however, make a few changes. Translate it into Spanish instead of Hindi. Lal becomes Pedro, and Lakshmi becomes Juanita. Cut the reference to Lord Rama. Substitute *tortilla* for *chappati*, and dress the puppets in sombreros instead of turbans. A few such changes and you are ready to perform in Central America.

If you translate into Swahili, Arjun becomes Kurwa, and Kamla becomes Doto. For music use a *zomari* (flute) instead of the *tabla*. The play's human situation is valid anywhere.

Despite the wide applicability of this play, there may be sound reasons to substitute an entirely different one. In any case, if you wish to inform your audiences about specific birth control methods, the Modules will prove useful.

The Translation is Important

Literacy House puppeteers have performed this play in both English and Hindi and have found that it works well. It is very important that any new translation be in the vernacular of the area in which it is played. In rural areas the phrases used must not be too formal for villagers to understand easily. Be sure the translation takes care not to water down or falsify the medical information in the play. The language used must not cause offense. Have a medical person who knows about methods of family planning read it to confirm that no misleading information has been introduced. Be especially careful with key words that deal with parts of the body, the sex act, or specific methods of contraception.

The play has six Modules about specific methods of family planning. The group sponsoring the production can choose the most appropriate one to use in the play. The choice should be made after consulting local leaders, considering which methods are readily available locally, and whether the audience will consist of men, women or both. The six Modules available are:

Module A– The contraceptive pill, from the woman's point of view. If this Module is used, it follows immediately after ACT I.

Module B– The contraceptive pill, from the man's point of view. This Module, and all Modules except Module A, follows ACT II.

Module C– The loop. The intrauterine device is presented in a discussion between the two men.

Module D– Sterilization. Both the vasectomy and the tubectomy are discussed as an absolute method of stopping further births.

Module E– The condom. The Module is recommended if no other birth control device is available.

Module X– All-purpose. This Module includes a discussion of all the methods mentioned above, and is designed to be used in a situation where there is a fully staffed and equipped family planning center to advise families individually.

Playing the Play

If your puppeteers feel that the show should be longer and funnier (in some parts of the world it is not uncommon for a show to last most of the night), then there is no reason why they should not add to it. We have suggested places in the script where dancing can be used, or songs, or additional comedy.

In constructing the play, a lot of old, tried and true Punch and Judy action techniques were used, because we know that they work all over the world.

Live local music will almost always be readily available wherever the show is to be performed, and it should be used. It may not be absolutely essential, but live and lively music, familiar to the audience, always makes a better show.

After the Flash Act that opens the play, the first character who appears is the Master of Ceremonies. His name should be dignified and characteristic of a respected person in the area. At first he merely introduces himself, and announces that a play is to be presented. He tells the audience that from time to time he will come back and speak to the audience. He introduces the main characters, and then departs.

At the end of the show, the Master of Ceremonies reappears. "Some of you must have some questions," he says, and introduces the family planning expert, or doctor, who has accompanied the show. If there is a local family planning expert, it might be a good idea for him to join in as well.

By this time one or two of the puppeteers who have finished with their roles should move back into the crowd, mingling with the audience, and they—or some other friends who have been prepared in advance—should stand ready to start the questioning. Sometimes it is difficult to get a crowd to begin to talk. We have suggested at the end of the script a few of the kinds of questions that might be "planted" but it will be better if they come from the local situation. And best of all, of course, if they come from the audience.

If the question is a general one, for instance, "How many children do you think it is a good idea to have?" it should be answered by the Master of Ceremonies, the puppet. It may be entirely unrelated to family planning—it could be a question to the goat!—or a question about how the puppets operate. Puppeteers know they must be ready for anything.

On the other hand, if it is a technical question relating to birth control techniques, then the Master of Ceremonies will refer the question to the family planning worker.

Even if there are no questions at all—people may be too shy, too embarrassed to ask questions in public—the family planning expert should make it clear that he or she will be in the clinic and ready for private counselling immediately after the show. The answers to any questions that arise should be available at the moment so far as possible, and in any case should be available on the night of the show. Full details as to where one may go for further information and services, the days and hours, should always be given. In some cases you may wish to show the actual device that is being talked about on the stage. This is a decision you can make with each performance.

Remember in any performance, flexibility is the word. Keep it topical and change your show to suit your audience.

You can write a whole new play if you want to, using puppet characters already known to your audience. But keep it funny, keep it medically correct, and use the Modules.

Small Family, Happy Family

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

(All characters should be renamed to suit locale and should be costumed in local dress.)

MASTER OF CEREMONIES (MC)	a wise man, whose name should suggest wisdom and respectability
ARJUN	a rich middle-aged farmer
LAL	his brother, a poor farmer with 6 children
GAUTAM-Child #1	Lal's eldest son
VIKRAM	Arjun's son
LAKSHMI	Lal's wife, shabby and older than her years
CHILD #2 **CHILD #3** **CHILD #4** **CHILD #5** **CHILD #6**	children of Lal and Lakshmi (can all be made on one frame)
GOAT	an unruly animal, but beloved by Lal's family

MONEY LENDER (ML)	the villain, if there is one
POLICEMAN	a simple-minded fellow who tries to do his duty
KAMLA	Arjun's wife, attractive and well dressed
FAMILY PLANNING EXPERT	This is a real person, not a puppet. It may be a man or a woman, who speaks the local language and is fully qualified to advise on family planning.

There should also be two additional puppets who can dance and sing in the Flash Act that precedes the show (see p. 33). They could be a couple of dragons, as originally developed for this play. They could also be well-known local puppets.

PROPERTIES

Hoe	Clothesline with clothes hanging
Six plants	Blanket
Watering jar	Gibbet–the hanging frame
Handkerchief	Rope with noose
Bag of flour	Box
Bread (*chapatti*)–seven loaves	Booklet

Also: 1. Simple pamphlets on family planning to hand to the audience after the performance.
2. Samples of birth control devices mentioned in the performance.

All these small but important props should be kept together carefully in a box and gathered together after the show.

FLASH ACT

The Flash Act is put on before the play begins, to gather the crowd and put them in a receptive mood. It can be any bright, musical, funny act.

It usually consists of some kind of dance of two puppets. One production of this show used a couple of funny dancing dragons, who are pictured here. If your company has its own favorite characters who are already familiar to your audience, you may certainly use them instead.

In any case, make the Flash Act cheerful, and noisy, and have it accompanied by the local musicians. If part of the audience misses some of the Flash Act, it does not matter. It has no messages. It simply says, "Here is a puppet show. We want you to come and have a good time."

36

ACT I—Small Family, Happy Family

MASTER OF CEREMONIES (MC): Good evening everyone. My name is Maharishi Ganpathi. (*Use a respected local name in every show*). In a few minutes we are going to present a play, and if there's anything about it you don't understand I will come back from time to time and answer questions from the audience—after all, I have written this play and I know what it's all about. Now this story is about two brothers. Here is Arjun (*Change the name for local identification*)

(*He points right [R] Arjun appears*)

And here is Lal.

(*Lal appears left [L]*)

Right now there's no reason for me to stay. We'll let the two brothers start the story.

(*MC exits, disappearing below playboard. The two men meet and greet each other in the traditional manner for the area. Arjun is dressed somewhat better than Lal*)

ARJUN: How are you brother? I do not come this way often, but I will stay a few days. How is your health?

LAL: Oh fine, fine. I am working hard, but I have my wife and my beautiful children. Hey, Gautam, my eldest son, come here and let my brother see how handsome you are.

(*Gautam enters L*)

Here is your Uncle Arjun, who knew you as a baby.

(*Gautam bows. He is a bit shabby*)

ARJUN: What a fine big boy.

LAL: And your son. Is he with you? He was so small last time we saw him.

ARJUN: (*Calls*) Vikram!

(*Vikram enters R. He is much better dressed. Lal and his son go over to look at the boy. They feel his clothes*)

GAUTAM: Hmm, nice–(*Aside to Lal*) Daddy, look at Vikram's suit, feel it.

(*Lal feels Vikram's suit*)

LAL: Oh, a very fine boy you have too. What fine families we have!

ARJUN: Yes Lal–and now I go to bring my wife so the mothers of these handsome boys may meet again–come Vikram.

(*Arjun and Vikram exit R*)

GAUTAM: Hey daddy, did you see the suit?

LAL: Be patient, Gautam, we will work hard and soon you will have as nice a suit.

(*Picks up his hoe*)

Dig, dig, dig. Even a better suit, do you hear me? I was always smarter than Arjun.

(*Starts to hoe*)

Work, work.

(*He pants*)

Work, work, work.

(*Sits down and rests–sighs–gets up and repeats the action*)

Work, work, work.

(*Looks around at his son who is seated watching him*)

Well, what are you looking at? Get to work! Work, work, work.

GAUTAM: I'm going.

(*Gautam runs off L*)

(*Lal's rhythm begins to get slower–he looks off R & L then slowly slides down his hoe handle and goes to sleep. Snores. One big snort wakes him. He jumps up, grabs his hoe, works furiously for a few seconds, then slows down and finally slides down to the ground. This time he is fast asleep*)

(*Enter L. Lal's wife Lakshmi. She walks up to Lal, looks at him carefully, and gives him a push. Lal jumps up but she has taken the hoe*)

LAL: Work, work, work.

(*He is jumping around*)

LAKSHMI: Hah–you lazy loafer! Here's your hoe here . . . and here.

(*Lakshmi hits him with the hoe. She puts the hoe into his hand. Lal starts to slide down the hoe. She pulls him up again. He starts to work*)

How are we going to feed the family if you sleep?

LAL: I'm tired my love.

(*Lal starts to embrace his wife*)

LAKSHMI: Let's not get started on love at a time like this.

LAL: But Lakshmi my beauty . . . besides we have enough time to . . .

(*Lakshmi exits*)

LAKSHMI: (*Voice offstage*) Lal!

(*Lal jumps up and works vigorously. He looks down*)

LAL: Work, work. Now to plant the seed. High yield variety seed. Pat, pat, pat. Now to get some water.

(*He gets a seed, drops it, hoes vigorously around it, gets a water jar and pours it on the seed. Stands back, up comes a stalk of corn, rice, wheat, or whatever is proper in the area. He dances around the corn*)

(*The MC enters R*)

MC: That was pretty fast, wasn't it? Yes, we know that high yield variety seed doesn't sprout quite that fast, but we can't wait all night. We just did it that way to save time.

(*MC disappears*)

LAL: What a beautiful stalk, and look at the ears! Why, in a little while we'll have more and more and everything's going to be just fine. Come look, Lakshmi! Children! (*Aside to audience*) When I do something wonderful nobody's around to see me.

(*Goat enters R. Lal turns*)

Oh, it's you. Beautiful isn't it?

(*Goat nods. Lal turns back. Goat approaches plant. Lal turns quickly. Goat trots off. Repeat this business of goat slyly approaching plant and then backing off innocently*)

Hello, my big beautiful fellow. My gorgeous big animal. May the Gods grant me more like you. Were you looking for something?

(*Goat mimes, 'Who me? No, never!' He pants*)

Isn't this a beautiful plant?

(*Goat nods, 'yes'*)

Now I know you'd like a bite, but this is for the family. You can go anywhere and nibble grass, can't you?

(*Goat nods, 'yes, yes'*)

Of course. So run along. Nice goat. Run along.

(*Goat runs off R. Lal watches him. Lal turns L and Goat dashes back. Lal turns R just in time to stop him. Raises hoe. Goat dashes off. Business with heads up and down, above and below the playboard. Goat finally leaves*)

Oh, we'll feed the family now. What a fine family. Lakshmi, bring our mid-day meal. Bring the children.

(*Lakshmi enters*)

LAKSHIMI: Here is the food—all we have. Now you feed them for a change.

(*Lakshmi puts down the food and goes off*)

LAL: Me feed the children? Woman's work, but I never found a job a man couldn't do better than a woman. There we are. I'll cut them up. There we are. One, two, three, four, five.

(*Divides food into five piles*)

Simple—(*Grunts*)—efficient—masculine.

(*Calls*) Children ! ! !

(*Six Children enter. They are graduated in size and their shirts are of different colors. They can all be operated together, that is on one form, or separately. Lal counts the children*)

Good. Now one, two, three, four, five—uh six? Wait a minute. (*Counts from the other end*)

One, two, three, four, five–six? No, I made a mistake. I should work on my arithmetic. Now where did I go wrong? Children, time to eat. (*Slowly*) One, two, three, four . . .

(*One child gets out of line*)

Come back here, you. I don't remember this one–where did you come from?

(*Lal takes child out of line and puts food in front of others. They start to eat. #4 starts to cry. Puts him back, takes food away from #1, who starts to cry, and gives to #4. Does this business two more times*)

CHILD #1: Waa, nothing for me to eat.

LAL: Ah, now wait a minute. Move the other way, move over one, move over one.

CHILD #6: Nothing for me to eat.

LAL: Quiet, quiet! Hey, Lakshmi.

(*Lakshmi enters*)

Who is this little one? Does she belong to us?

LAKSHMI: Of course she does. That's Uzra. You don't remember the children, but I do. Every time a new one comes along I remember all right. While I get the babies, what do you do? Oh, everybody knows what you do!

(*Lal starts to work very hard around his stalk of corn*)

Sure, you plant the seeds for corn. You plant the seeds for babies, too–but who has to carry them? I do.

(Here Lakshmi could add a mournful song and dance)

LAL: I have to provide for them, don't I? Don't talk

about my wonderful family like that. My handsome Gautam—my pretty Shati—my good Krishen—my bright-eyed—uh—bright-eyed—what's her name?

(*All Children cry*)

LAKSHMI: And your hungry Nari and Sari. What are they going to eat?!

(*Lal backs up. She goes to his other side—no escape*)

(*Child cries*)

What are they going to eat?

LAL: I shall sell the goat. Gautam, run and fetch the money lender.

GAUTAM: Yes, Daddy.

(*Gautam exits*)

LAL: See, a family is a very useful thing—I don't have to run for the money lender.

(*The other Children leave, except Child #2*)

LAKSHMI: Hah!

LAL: Sari, fetch me the goat.

CHILD #2: Yes, Daddy.

(*Child #2 exits*)

LAL: See?

LAKSHMI: Hah!

(*Enter Goat who sniffs at plant, but Lal brings him to center stage. Goat attempts to steal corn*)

LAL: I have something to tell you, my fine animal. First of all, you are a beautiful animal. And I love you very much.

(*Goat nods. Goat rubs his head against Lal's side*)

(*Aside to audience*) I must break it to him gently.
(*To Goat*) Consider how unhappy I shall be when you leave us.
(*Goat looks at him*)
But also consider that it will be for the good of the family. We shall have to sell you to buy food for all the children. Oh, I'm sorry! How we shall miss you!
(*Lal starts to cry*)
Little Gautam–little–you know their names . . .
(*Goat starts to cry*)
No, no, I can't stand it.
(*Lal gets handkerchief, wipes goat's eyes, wipes his own eyes, wipes goat's face*)

MONEY LENDER (ML): Is this the animal?
(*Enter Money Lender with a sack of flour. Puts it down. Starts to look at the goat. As he bends over to look, Lal picks up the bag of flour. The Money Lender grabs the bag away, puts it down and pushes Lal away from it. As he does so the Goat goes for the bag of flour. Lal pulls the Goat L. Money Lender pulls the bag R*)
Now let's start all over again.

LAL: A very fine animal. Look at the intelligent brow–the noble nose–the keen eyes! Worth at least two sacks of flour!

ML: (*Looking*) Eyes, mm. Brow, mm. Neck–tail.
(*Looks at Goat's tail which wags in his face*)
One bag of flour.

LAL: Two bags.

ML: One bag.

(*Goat butts the Money Lender, and knocks him flat*)

No bags.

(*Money Lender picks up bag and starts to walk off. Lal grabs end of bag. They pull it back and forth across the stage*)

LAL: One bag.

(*Still pulling*)

ML: No bags.

LAL: One bag.

ML: No bag.

(*Goat butts him*)

Ouch! One bag for the goat, and five rupees!

(*Change money to fit local currency*)

LAL: Where will I find the rupees?

ML: That's your problem. Five rupees next month. And of course if you don't have the money, I can always take your hoe.

(*Picks up hoe*)

(*To Goat*) Come on.

(*Starts to pull off Goat; there is pushing and pulling. Lal picks up bag and exits L. Goat butts Money Lender off R and comes back. Eyes corn-stalk carefully. Bites it, carries it off R, chewing. Lal re-enters. Suddenly sees spot where the corn-stalk was, looks down under the playboard, looks at spot from both sides. Turns away, looks back quickly. Lal cries, sighs, slowly picks up hoe and starts to work*)

(*Here Lal could do a song and dance with 'How many children make a family–2 or 3? 6–or is it 7? 6–or is it 7. How to feed them all?'*)

ARJUN: (*Entering*) How's with you my brother? The sun has set, yet you are still at your labors.

LAL: A very unusual day, Arjun. My lovely wife—may she stub her toe—has cruelly misled me. I thought that I had five beautiful children, but it turns out that I have six. I work, work, work all day and while my back is turned she has brought into this already populous family, another child—another mouth to feed.

ARJUN: Not the case at all my friend. You are just as responsible for the children as your wife is.

LAL: In a way, but . . .

(*Lakshmi has been hanging out some wash to dry, down L. She puts her head out from time to time to listen*)

ARJUN: Look at my family. I am older than you, yet I have but two children to feed—and the next one will come only if we decide to have it.

LAKSHMI: (*Aside to audience*) That sounds good to me.

(*Lakshmi puts her head out, then ducks*)

ARJUN: After three years of marriage we had a child because we wanted it that way—we planned it. When he went to school, we had another.

LAL: Then you are less of a man, or if not that, a fool. (*Aside to audience*) I knew he was something of an idiot.
(*To Arjun*) To create children—that is to be a man.

ARJUN: To create children and feed them and keep them happy--that is to be a man. If you didn't have a child every year, you wouldn't have to work so hard. Your wife would not be forever carrying a baby.

(*Lakshmi sticks head out and nods vigorously, but ducks back when Lal looks around*)

You could rest.

(*Lakshmi goes through the same business*)

You might even get fat.

(*Lakshmi nods, then reflects, shakes her head 'no!'*)

And you would not miss one moment of the pleasure you have of being a good husband.

LAL: How can you say that? How can this be?

(*Lakshmi has pushed the hanging clothes way out. Lal sees clothes move*)

I didn't realize the wind was so strong.

ARJUN: I don't want to hurt your feelings, my brother, but see how much richer I am because I have but two children.

LAL: Oh no, you've got it all wrong. I am the rich one with six children. You are poor in children. Five years between children! My poor Arjun, think of your neglected wife!

ARJUN: I think of my happy wife and happy children. I shall go to fetch my wife and you shall see how happy and how well she is. How fat my son, and what he has learned in school.

(*Arjun exits*)

(*Enter Gautam*)

GAUTAM: Daddy please—a chapatti—please—

(*Lal gives him one. All the other Children run screaming after Gautam who exits with the others in pursuit*)

CHILDREN: Gimme, gimme, gimme. Gautam got a chapatti—but he won't have it long.

LAL: I wonder what Arjun meant–'See how rich I am–only two children.' (*Pause*) But with my hoe I shall feed my remarkable family.

ML: (*Offstage*) Ram Lal, Ram Lal! The goat has run away!

LAL: Oh Brahama preserve me! The Money Lender. So soon. Wife come quick. Hide me–the Money Lender is coming for the money. Hide the flour. Hide the children. Hide my hoe. Hide me! Lakshmi . . .

(*Lakshmi runs around and covers him up with a blanket. They go into the house and out again*)

ML: (*Offstage*) Ram Lal!

(*Lakshmi pulls down a blanket and covers up Lal whose eyes and nose are just visible to the audience*)

(*Enter Money Lender*)

ML: Where is Ram Lal?

LAKSHMI: Why he said he was going to the–going to the . . .

LAL: (*Raises blanket*) . . . to the village!

(*Money Lender does not see Lal*)

LAKSHMI: To the village.

ML: Why did he go to the village?

LAKSHMI: Why? He told me that he was–was . . .

LAL: (*Lifts blanket*) . . . going to pray in the temple.

LAKSHMI: He went to pray in the temple.

ML: To pray in the temple? Lal?

LAL: (*Whispers*) To pray for the Money Lender.

LAKSHMI: To pray for you.

LAL: (*Whispers*) To get richer.

LAKSHMI: To get richer.

LAL: And fatter.

LAKSHMI: And fatter.

ML: Lal told you that?

(*Money Lender notices the movement under the blanket. Studies it*)

What is that?

LAKSHMI: We have mice.

ML: (*Looks as bump shivers under blanket*) Something is wrong. I came here for money.

(*Hits blanket*)

Otherwise I take the hoe.

(*Lifts hoe*)

And if I don't get my money . . . . .

(*Hits blanket*)

(*Money Lender dances, with music*)

If I don't get my money . . .

(*He hits again*)

If I don't get my money . . .

(*Hits again*)

LAL: Ouch! Ouch!

ML: The mice are singing.

(*He keeps hitting blanket*)

Goodbye.

(*He starts to leave*)

LAL: No, no! Come back.

(*He ducks back under blanket*)

(*Money Lender turns, then starts to leave again. Lal runs after Money Lender with blanket over his head. Money Lender becomes frightened, and falls before the figure*)

ML: Ooooh, a ghost! Heaven help me–I'll give back the goat, I'll give back the hoe! Keep the flour . . .

(*Lakshmi looks around from behind the hanging clothes*)

(*Money Lender screams and runs offstage. Lal ducks down under the blanket. Money Lender sneaks back in for the hoe, starts to pick it up, but as he does, Lal, like a ghost, pops up again. Lal is facing Stage L*)

(*Money Lender motions to Policeman Offstage R. Policeman enters. They approach Lal and flank him. Lal drops to the ground*)

LAKSHMI: So the policeman will lock him up. At least I'll get a bit of rest.

(*She takes the clothesline down*)

(*Money Lender picks up hoe and exits with Policeman*)

LAL: My hoe . . . give me back my hoe!

(*Lal runs after them, comes back Center Stage and cries, and then ducks down under blanket again*)

(*Arjun enters from R with Kamla*)

KAMLA: Ah, my dear Lakshmi. So good to see you again.

LAKSHMI: (*Aside*) Arjun's wife? Is this the one I used to know?

(*Lakshmi examines her closely*)

ARJUN: But of course.

LAKSHMI: (*Still looking*) (*Aside*) Time has played tricks on me. (*To Kamla*) How well you look, sister. But what has happened? When we both first married, were you not older than I?

KAMLA: Yes, Lakshmi, two years older.

LAKSHMI: And look at us now. What has happened to me?

KAMLA: When a man carries a heavy load he must rest from time to time or his body grows weary and old.

LAKSHMI: Yes?

KAMLA: And when a woman carries a . . . child—one child after another—that's a heavy load.

LAKSHMI: And look at me! But how can I deny my hard-working husband?

KAMLA: You don't have to deny your hard-working husband anything. You can go on just the same as before—but you don't need to have the baby—until you want it.

LAKSHMI: If that's how you stayed so young, tell me more.

Arjun and I have only two children. If we want another we shall have another.

LAKSHMI: Just like that?

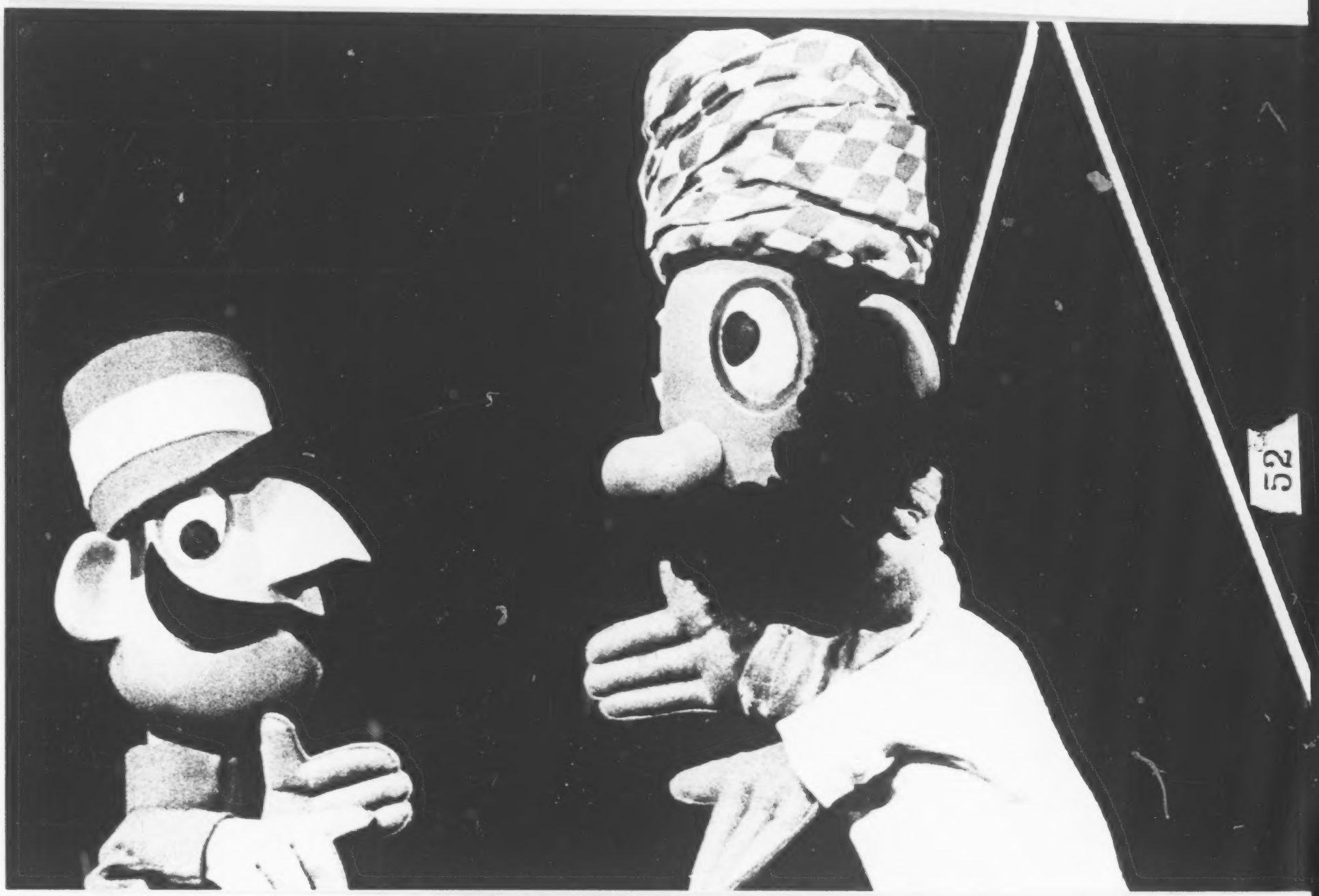
KAMLA: Just like that. And Arjun is a happy father. And I am a happy wife. And I am in no danger. Everything is safe, absolutely safe.

(*Exit Lakshmi and Kamla*)

END OF ACT I

If Module A is to be used, it should be inserted HERE, to be followed by Act II, then Act III.

All other Modules follow Act II.



ACT II—Small Family, Happy Family

LAL: (*Entering*) My hoe gone—my goat gone—my beautiful corn—my money—my hungry children—Oh Lal, Lal, what is there to live for?—My wife?—possibly . . .

LAKSHMI: (*Offstage*) Lal—you good for nothing. Listen to this!

LAL: (*Holding head*) But possibly not. There's only one thing left to do—Lord Krishna forgive me—

(*Lal goes slowly about setting up a gibbet with a rope noose. He gets a box and climbs on it. He puts the rope around his neck*)

Goodbye cruel world. Forgive me, my children, my wife.

(*He jumps and kicks the box away. He swings on the rope*)

There, it's done—I'm dead. At least I think I am. Well, no more responsibility. (*Coughs*)

(*Enter Policeman*)

POLICEMAN: See here now, what are you doing up there?

LAL: Use your eyes, you idiot! I've taken my life. (*Aside*) At least this allows me some advantages now. I can talk back to a cop.

POLICEMAN: Come down immediately. Suicide is illegal.

(*Starts to pull on Lal*)

LAL: Ouch! You're not helping any. Besides—I have no wish to live—I cannot support my family.

POLICEMAN: Well if you won't come down at least I must report the suicide—name?

LAL: Lal.

POLICEMAN: Next of kin? Friends?

LAL: Wife Lakshmi. Brother Arjun. Children–um–let's see . . .

POLICEMAN: That's enough. Arjun! Arjun! Come quickly.
(*Enter Arjun*)

ARJUN: Look! Lal has taken his life.
My poor Lal. Dead.

LAL: Yes, your poor unlucky Lal.

ARJUN: You speak? But my dear brother. I was about to explain to you, you don't have to have a child every year. You can still be a proud man and a good husband and have a child only when you, the head of the family, decide to.

LAL: (*With difficulty*) What did you say?

ARJUN: (*Shouts*) I said you don't have to have a child every year.

LAL: I can't hear you very well from here. My neck . . . (*He coughs*)

ARJUN: Well, come on down so that we can talk better.
(*They take Lal down. Lal stretches elaborately*)

POLICEMAN: If he's not dead, then I guess I can't charge him with anything.
(*Policeman exits*)

LAL: (*Rubbing his neck*) Oh. Aaahh. That is much better. You were saying, my brother?

ARJUN: That you need not have a baby every year.

LAL: Brother, help me. I don't know what to do.

ARJUN: Listen carefully, brother. Children can be wonderful. If they are well fed and happy they will

bring you much happiness. But remember, the Lord Rama had only two children.

LAL: Two children? That's right– Luve and . . .

ARJUN: . . . and Kushe.

LAL: Yes! Yes! (*In excited tone*) Why didn't I think of that before?

ARJUN: Remember, a happy child is more of a pleasure to his father than a crying hungry baby.

(*Lal's eldest son Gautam enters, whining*)

GAUTAM: Daddy– can I have a chapatti?

(*Lal turns, looks at the child, goes over and puts his arm around him*)

LAL: My son, your father has learned a great lesson. You can grow up to be a big strong boy if you have enough to eat and if your mother has time to take care of you.

(*He gives a chapatti to Gautam, who takes it and starts to run off. Lal pulls him by the collar and whispers*)

Don't let your brothers and sisters see you eating it.

(*Gautam exits*)

Tell me, Arjun. What to do? Is there really something I can do so that there will be no new baby to eat the food of my family?

ARJUN: Remember Lal, brother, we are living in a new time. Man has walked on the moon.

LAL: Yes.

(*Lal looks up at the sky, scratches his head in puzzlement*)

ARJUN: It is a new age. That is what I am trying to tell you. The wonders of medicine allow us to do many things that were denied our fathers.

LAL: Like what?

ARJUN: Like . . . How many babies have been born to you?

LAL: Six–I think.

ARJUN: And how many are still living?

LAL: All six.

ARJUN: How many brothers did we have who died as little ones?

LAL: So many.

ARJUN: Only you and I remain. But now, you see, the chances of a baby living are much greater. Do you understand?

LAL: Maybe so. I think so.

ARJUN: And, you see, a starving baby, even a hungry baby, is not only a burden to his family, but to our country as well.

LAL: Yes, yes. Get to the point, Arjun. What can I do to limit my family? That is the question.

ARJUN: That is what I am trying to tell you.

LAL: Excuse me, respected brother, but you are telling me nothing.

ARJUN: It is hard to explain things to a man who would hang himself from a tree.

LAL: What must I do to get you to answer my question? Must I throw myself at your feet? Shall I dance for you?

(Here Lal may execute a dance and sing a song. "What To do, What To Do?")

ARJUN: Lal, Lal, listen to me. I am trying to tell you what you want to know.

LAL: Then speak, brother.

ARJUN: There are so many things you can do, Lal, to limit the size of your family.

LAL I am listening.

ARJUN: I am not the doctor.

LAL: No. That is true.

ARJUN: The best advice will come from the doctor.

LAL: Naturally. But that is for rich people.

ARJUN: No, my brother.

END OF ACT II

Here Module B, C, D, E, or X may be inserted.

ACT III—Small Family, Happy Family

LAL: Then, my wise brother Arjun, how may Lal become possessed of all this wisdom?

ARJUN: There are so many people ready to help you. It is all written in this paper.

(*Arjun gives Lal a booklet*)

You can read it.

LAL: (*Nods*) If I can read, I can read it.

ARJUN: You can ask the doctor.

LAL: I can ask the doctor.

ARJUN: You can ask the village worker.

LAL: I can ask the village worker.

ARJUN: You can ask the family planning worker.

LAL: I can ask the family planning worker.

ARJUN: You can go to the family planning clinic—wherever you see the red triangle.

(*Here specific directions where information and services may be obtained should be given*)

You know the place?

LAL: I have seen the place.

ARJUN: Then go. Or send your wife.

LAL: (*Calling*) Lakshmi! Lakshmi! Did you know about this?

(*Lakshmi enters*)

LAKSHMI: Yes, you and I know now and I hope that together we shall get some rest and some food and a happy family.

ARJUN: Here, Lal, is a new hoe and some seeds to start again.

LAL: Now there will be enough to feed the family.

(*Children enter, running*)

(*Lal starts to plant and hoe. Up come many plants, one after another*)

(*The Goat comes back*)

Just a minute.

(*Lal takes the rope off the gibbet and ties the Goat just far enough so he can't eat the plants*)

Plenty to eat, but no more children for a while.

(*Music–"No more kids and no more worry."*)

(*Lal goes to Lakshmi and they dance and sing with music*)

(*Near the end of the dance MC enters and watches while they finish and exit*)

MC: And thus ends the story of the two brothers, Lal and Arjun. And it looks like a happy life for Lal. He will now get medical advice and there is medical advice for you in the audience. I would like to introduce Mr. _____.

(*The Family Planning Expert, not a puppet, appears in front of the stage*)

This gentleman and I would be glad to answer any of your questions and in the meanwhile, the families of Lal and Arjun are celebrating a new life.

END OF ACT III

During the last speech of the Master of Ceremonies, one or two of the puppeteers who are not in the last scene, or members of the community who have been prepared in advance, should mingle with the audience. They should be ready to ask the first questions in order to help get discussion started by the audience.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

1. Where is this clinic?
2. How much will this cost?
3. If the woman has the operation, how long must she remain in the hospital?
4. Do you have anything written that will tell us about these things?

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MODULE A

The Pill, Woman's Point of View

KAMLA: There are many, many ways to limit your family without losing any of the pleasures of being married.

LAKSHMI: Many ways?

KAMLA: Come with me and I will tell you more.

LAKSHMI: Tell me, tell me, what can I do?

KAMLA: You can take a pill.

LAKSHMI: I take pills for a headache.

KAMLA: Well, just as you take a pill to prevent a headache, you can take a special kind of pill so you won't have a baby. You take this pill every day. So easy!

LAKSHMI: I just take a pill? Every day? Is there any danger?

KAMLA: The doctor will examine you first to make sure the pill is right for you. So there's nothing to fear.

LAKSHMI: Nothing?

KAMLA: Nothing!

LAKSHMI: And there will be no baby?

KAMLA: If you are sure to take the pill every day, there will be no baby, til' you want one. That is better, no?

LAKSHMI: You are taking this pill?

KAMLA: Yes–thousands–millions of women are taking this pill.

LAKSHMI: Even in Delhi?

KAMLA: Of course in Delhi.

(*Kamla and Lakshmi exit*)

End of Module A

MODULE B

The Pill, Man's Point of View

LAL: Tell me what can I do?

ARJUN: For one thing, your wife can take a pill.

LAL: I take pills for a headache.

ARJUN: Just like that. The same way you take pills for a headache your wife can take special pills so she won't have a baby. Just a pill every day. So easy.

LAL: Just a pill every day. Is there any danger?

ARJUN: Well, your wife might gain a little weight. The doctor will examine her first, so there's nothing to fear.

LAL: Nothing?

ARJUN: Nothing!

LAL: And there will be no baby?

ARJUN: No baby! Millions of women all over the world are using this pill.

LAL: Even in Delhi?

ARJUN: Of course in Delhi.

LAL: But suppose we want another baby?

ARJUN: She just stops taking the pill.

LAL: That's all?

ARJUN: That's all. And there are other things you can do to keep from having babies until you want them. The doctor or nurse or public health worker can advise you.

End of Module B

MODULE C

The Loop

ARJUN: For one thing, supposing that your wife were fitted with a loop.

LAL: A loop? I have heard of the loop. What is it?

ARJUN: A loop is a small plastic ring that is worn inside the place where babies come from. That stops the next baby from coming until you want it.

LAL: You mean I'd have to stop . . .

ARJUN: You don't have to stop anything. Your life will go on as before but you will be happier because you won't be worrying about the next baby.

LAL: But consider my wife–will it cause her suffering?

ARJUN: No–maybe a little bleeding for a month or two. Some discomfort for a while, but nothing more. But when you are ready for another child all you have to do is have the ring removed.

LAL: That's all?

ARJUN: That's all. Many, many people are using it all over the world.

LAL: Even in Delhi?

ARJUN: Yes, of course in Delhi. And there are other things you can do.

End of Module C

MODULE D

Sterilization

ARJUN: Listen carefully. If your family is too large—if more babies would be a burden—there is an absolutely sure way to keep from having more.

LAL: Tell me my friend. Tell me!

ARJUN: If you really want to be sure, you can have a simple operation. Not both of you—just one.

LAL: So?

ARJUN: If the father has the simple operation it stops the seed from reaching the mother.

LAL: And if the mother has the operation?

ARJUN: It stops the egg.

LAL: But then will I be less of a man?

ARJUN: No, no—everything will go on as before.

LAL: Ah yes, yes. That is good. Is it costly, this operation?

ARJUN: Costly, my dear brother? No, my dear brother, it is not costly.

(Here add details true to the locality such as: In fact, it is free. The doctor will know how to advise you on having a vasectomy, or, your wife can have an operation a tubectomy. While gone for the operation, you or your wife will be given some money to pay for travel, time and food.)

LAL: But has it been tried, brother?

ARJUN: Over a million such operations were performed in India this year.

LAL: Even in Delhi?

ARJUN: But of course in Delhi.

End of Module D

MODULE E

The Condom

ARJUN: Look! Supposing I plant a seed. Like this.

(*Arjun plants a seed. He pats down the earth and gets a watering jar and pours some water. Up comes the plant*)

LAL: That's just what happens to me. I plant the seed and I get a new baby.

ARJUN: Look here. This is one way to limit your family. Now remember when I planted the corn . . .

LAL: And it popped right up?

(*Arjun takes seed again and wraps it up. Plants it*)

ARJUN: Ah, but watch! I've wrapped up the seed—it can't get out. See, the seed can't get out.

(*He pats it down. Waters it. They both bend over the place in the ground and look at it, then at each other*)

LAL: All wrapped up, eh? Can't get out, no?

ARJUN: No!

LAL: No plant.

ARJUN: No baby.

LAL: No baby—it's like that?

ARJUN: You can do the same thing too by wrapping up your seed. There is a wrapper a man wears when he is making love. Many men are using it all over the world.

LAL: Even in Delhi?

ARJUN: Of course in Delhi.

LAL: Just like that?

ARJUN: It's like that—but that's only one way. There are many ways. Many safe ways to keep your family happy, well-fed, and the size that you want it. Remember if there's more detailed information you want, you can go to your local health clinic for free advice.

End of Module E

MODULE X

All Purpose

ARJUN: Lal, Lal, listen to me. I am trying to tell you what you want to know.

LAL: Then speak, brother.

ARJUN: There are so many things you can do, Lal, to limit the size of your family. You have a choice.

LAL: A choice?

ARJUN: Yes. Choose for yourself, whatever you want to to. Your wife can take a special pill.

LAL: My wife can take a pill?

ARJUN: A special pill.

LAL: A pill? Just a little pill.

ARJUN: Yes. One pill every day and there will be no baby as long as she takes a pill.

LAL: Every day.

ARJUN: Every day.

LAL: What else can my wife do?

ARJUN: She can go to the clinic and be fitted with a loop.

LAL: Ah yes, I have heard about the loop. What is the loop?

ARJUN: It is a small device that is inserted in the place where babies come from so that your seed will not start a baby.

LAL: Never?

ARJUN: So long as the loop remains in place, there will not be a baby. She gets the loop from the clinic.
(*Here additional dialogue may be added about the location of the family planning clinic, the name of the doctor or health worker. Use specific information*)

LAL: Hmm . . . I can send my wife to the clinic. Then she will learn about these things.

ARJUN: Yes. But there are things that you can do yourself.

LAL: Myself? (*Lal turns away*) But . . . you said that I could keep all the pleasures of being a good husband.

ARJUN: That is true. But remember you have some responsibility too.

LAL: Hmmm. (*He scratches his head*) Maybe you are right, my brother.

ARJUN: If you choose, you can wear a condom.

LAL: A condom?

ARJUN: It is a small thing. You wear it each time you want to be with your wife. This time you will catch the seed. Then no baby will start.

LAL: No baby. But everything else?

ARJUN: Everything else will be the same.

LAL: I can still be . . . a loving husband?

ARJUN: Yes.

LAL: And my wife?

ARJUN: A loving wife. But no baby. No baby until you decide you want one.

LAL: Ah, yes. Until I decide. Another baby. Another baby?! But, my dear brother, I am already blessed with six . . . or is it seven?

ARJUN: That is so. It is six.

LAL: Six.

ARJUN: Of course, Lal, in case you, the head of the family, and your wife, decide you have enough children already . . .

LAL: Yes . . . what then?

ARJUN: If you think your family is big enough already, if you decide that you shall not want any more children, then you or you wife can have an operation.

LAL: An operation?

ARJUN: A simple operation. And there will be no more children. Ever.

LAL: No more children.

ARJUN: But life will go on as before.

End of Module X

Appendix I

HOW TO MAKE A GLOVE PUPPET

What are puppets? Puppets are inanimate figures that are made to move by human effort before an audience. They are made of wood, metal, plastic, rubber, and buffalo hide . . . to name a few. They are of many shapes and sizes and operated in an astonishing variety of ways. There are marionettes operated with strings from above. There are shadow puppets, rod puppets, and glove puppets. Variants of most of these are known in all parts of the world though each country has its own specialty.

Probably the most commonly used puppet is also the simplest to operate. This is the glove puppet, which is manipulated from below the stage, taking its life from the movement of the puppeteer's hand.

The puppet head is hollow and fits on the first finger of the puppeteer's hand. The puppet hands are also hollow and fit on puppeteer's thumb and middle finger. The puppet body is its dress, into which the puppeteer fits his forearm. It has no legs. One puppeteer, if he is skillful, can operate two puppets at once, one on each hand.

"Small Family, Happy Family" can be performed with any kind of puppet but we include here instructions for making a papier-mache glove puppet.

Specifically, there are two methods of making papier-mache puppet heads. One involves a solid carved wooden or clay base that is covered with strips of paper and paste; the other uses pulp made of paper and paste with which the head is shaped. We have chosen to describe the second method because, although it is more complicated, it requires only materials that are inexpensive and easily available, and because the head is lighter and easier to manipulate. This technique has been worked out by the puppeteers at Literacy House in India, who have found it effective.

MATERIALS NEEDED

work table
small piece of cardboard or postcards (for neck)
used light bulb, balloon, or newspaper (for base of head)
newspaper, about 32 full sheets
bucket of warm water
wheat flour (about ½ tea cup)
copper sulphate crystals (This helps preserve the puppet head from mold. It can be eliminated if not available, or fenugreek [*mathi*] can be substituted.)

---

pointed tool, or pencil
knife
sandpaper
shellac, or linseed oil (50 grams) and zinc oxide (100 grams)
paint brushes
turpentine (to clean brushes)

---

small piece of cloth (about ½ meter, for dress)
felt (or any heavy material, for hands)
needle and thread
scissors
light weight string or heavy thread
decorations

TIME: About one week from start to finish

DIRECTIONS

STEP I
The Base

A used light bulb is ideal if available.

A balloon blown up the size of the head may be used.

 Newspaper crumpled into the shape of a ball and tied with string may be used. This then is attached to a neck made out of small roll of cardboard or a postcard.

Generally the size of the puppet head should be between 3½ and 4 inches, and no larger than 5 inches, because it becomes too heavy to manipulate.

STEP II
The Paste

Tear newspaper into small irregular pieces.

Soak the pieces in the bucket of water overnight.

Strain off the excess water. This can be done by emptying the contents of the bucket into a cloth bag and squeezing out the water.

Sprinkle the flour and copper sulphate crystals (enough to give the mixture a blue color) over the wet newspaper.

Knead this mixture until it is a smooth mash.

STEP III
Making the Puppet Head

Take a handful of the newspaper paste and start shaping the head on the base.

Be sure no spaces are left, and that the neck is also covered.

If the wadded paper base is used, leave a small hole at the back of the head for removing the paper later.

At the bottom of the neck make a small ridge by pasting on several strips of paper. The ridge is necessary to keep the dress on.

Save some of the paste for possible later repairs.

Before the newspaper paste has dried, model the facial features with the help of a pointed tool such as a knife or pencil.

STEP IV
Drying

Papier-mache must be completely dry before it can be painted. This can take as long as a week. The drying time may be shortened by baking the head in the sun or an oven.

If some wrinkles appear on the face after it has dried, another thin coat of paste may be used where necessary.

STEP V
Removing the Base

After the head is thoroughly dried, remove the base.

If a light bulb was used, crack the head sharply enough to break the glass but not the papier-mache. If the head is damaged, it can be repaired with a little of the newspaper paste.

If a balloon base was used, simply pop the balloon.

If a wadded newspaper was used, pull it out through the hole left on the back of the head. Then paste a small piece of heavy paper over the hole.

STEP VI
Preparing for Painting

The head must be smooth before paint is applied. Use the sandpaper for smoothing the surface.

Apply a coat of shellac to the head. If shellac is not available, boil linseed oil and mix it with the zinc oxide. Apply this mixture with a brush and let this coat dry completely.

STEP VII
Painting the Head

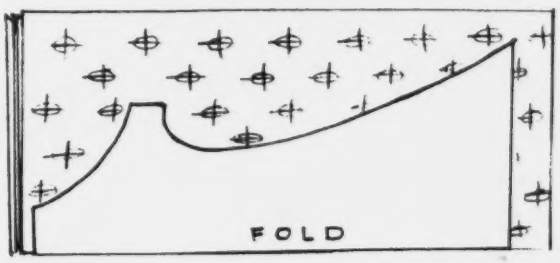
Oil-based paints are best, but any bright opaque color may be used. Best effects are obtained with bold features in primary colors. Small details look messy.

After the paint has dried, a second coat of shellac may be applied to give a gloss.

Hair may be made with yarn, fur, wood shavings or painted on with black paint.

STEP VIII
Dressing the Puppet

The body of the puppet is a dress. Make a paper pattern being sure the dress will be wide enought to fit over an adult hand. Place the paper pattern on two pieces of cloth that have been folded in half lengthwise.



Place the two pieces together with the pattern inside.

Stitch the shoulder seams and the sides.

Hem the neck and bottom edges.

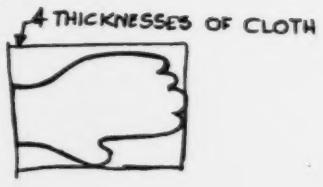
Fold a small hem in the edge of the sleeve.

Gather the neck of the dress, leaving a length of thread attached. Place the puppet's head upside down in the neck of the

dress. Pull the thread to make the gathers fit the neck of the puppet. Tie a piece of string above the ridge to keep the dress more firmly from pulling off. Then turn the dress right side out.

STEP IX
Making the Hands

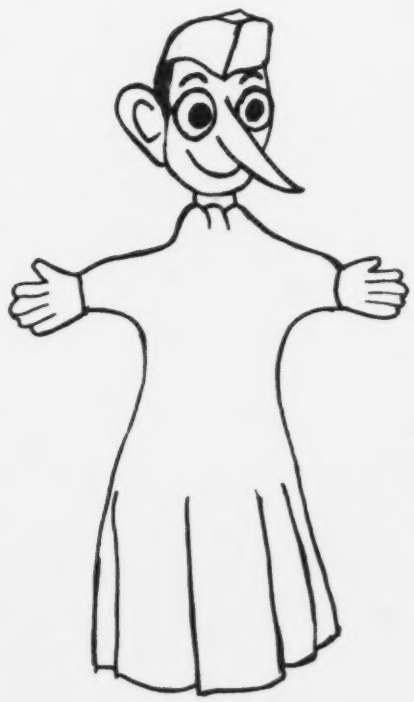
To make the puppet's hands, fold the piece of flesh-colored material into four thicknesses and cut out two gloves.

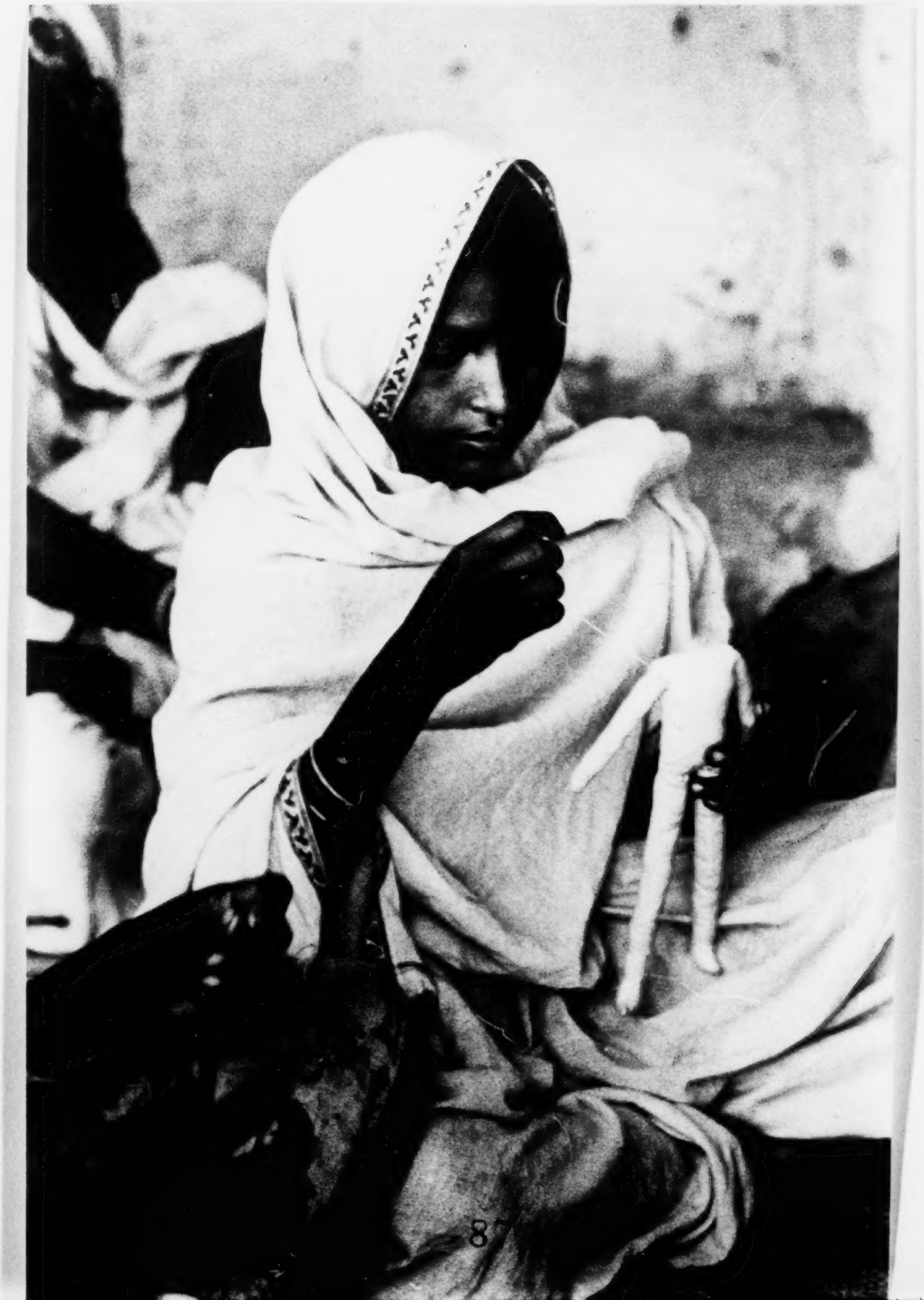


Be sure they are large enough to fit the tip of the middle finger and thumb.

Sew hands together with a buttonhole stitch. The fingers are indicated by a running stitch. Sew a hand into each sleeve of the dress.

Additional decoration of the puppet depends on his character and the creator's imagination. A scarf, cap, or turban may be added.





Appendix II

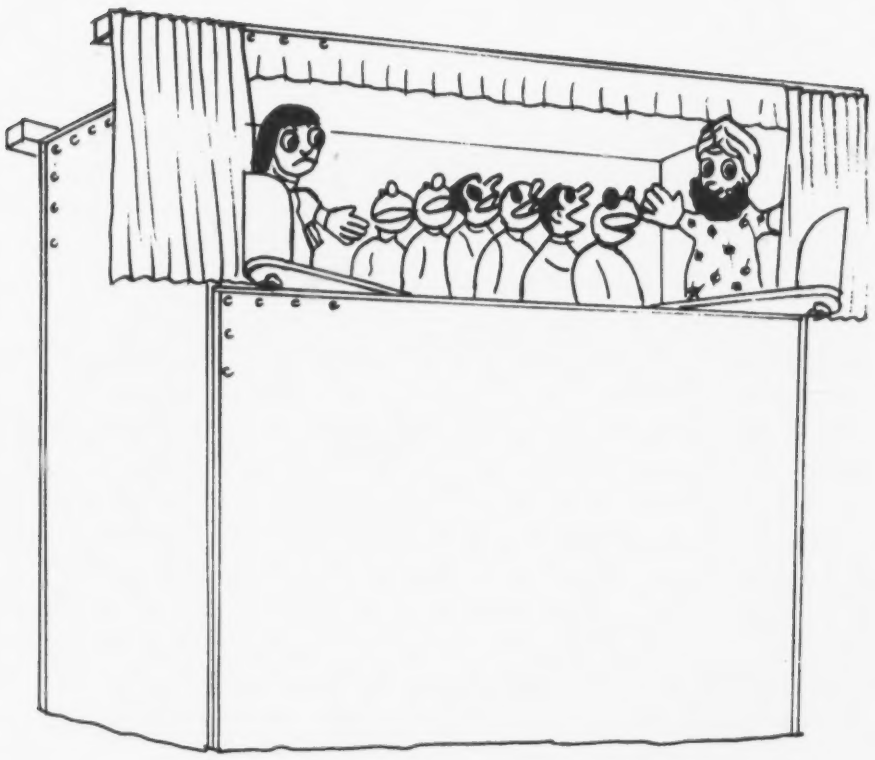
HOW TO BUILD THE STAGE

We have included the drawing of a puppet stage. This is a stage designed especially for use with this show. Although there is no reason why the play could not be performed with whatever stage the puppeteers customarily use, or with an improvised stage, this one has a lot of advantages. It is easily transportable, and quickly erected. Its playing board is up over the heads of the puppeteers, enabling them to move about freely and play to a large audience. It is made of materials easily available almost anywhere in the world, with a minimum of metal parts, and is easily repaired. Literacy House puppeteers have used it, and it works.

If the stage were made of bamboo, it might be somewhat cheaper, and a little lighter. Wood, however, will make a sturdier and longer-lasting stage. The poles can be strapped together on the side or the top of a jeep, and the puppets and the other parts and equipment can be carried inside. With careful planning the whole show could be put on four or five bicycles and carried that way, though since some of the poles are eight or nine feet long, special racks might have to be put on the bicycles.

In some parts of the world puppeteers work from chairs, with the playing board barely five feet from the ground. This makes for very limited action on the stage, and furthermore a standing audience cannot see what is going on. With this stand-up stage the puppeteer is freed to move around behind his proscenium, do more, and at the same time play to a larger audience.

The height of the playboard should be adjusted up or down to fit the height of the average puppeteer. If one puppeteer is shorter



Finished Puppet Stage

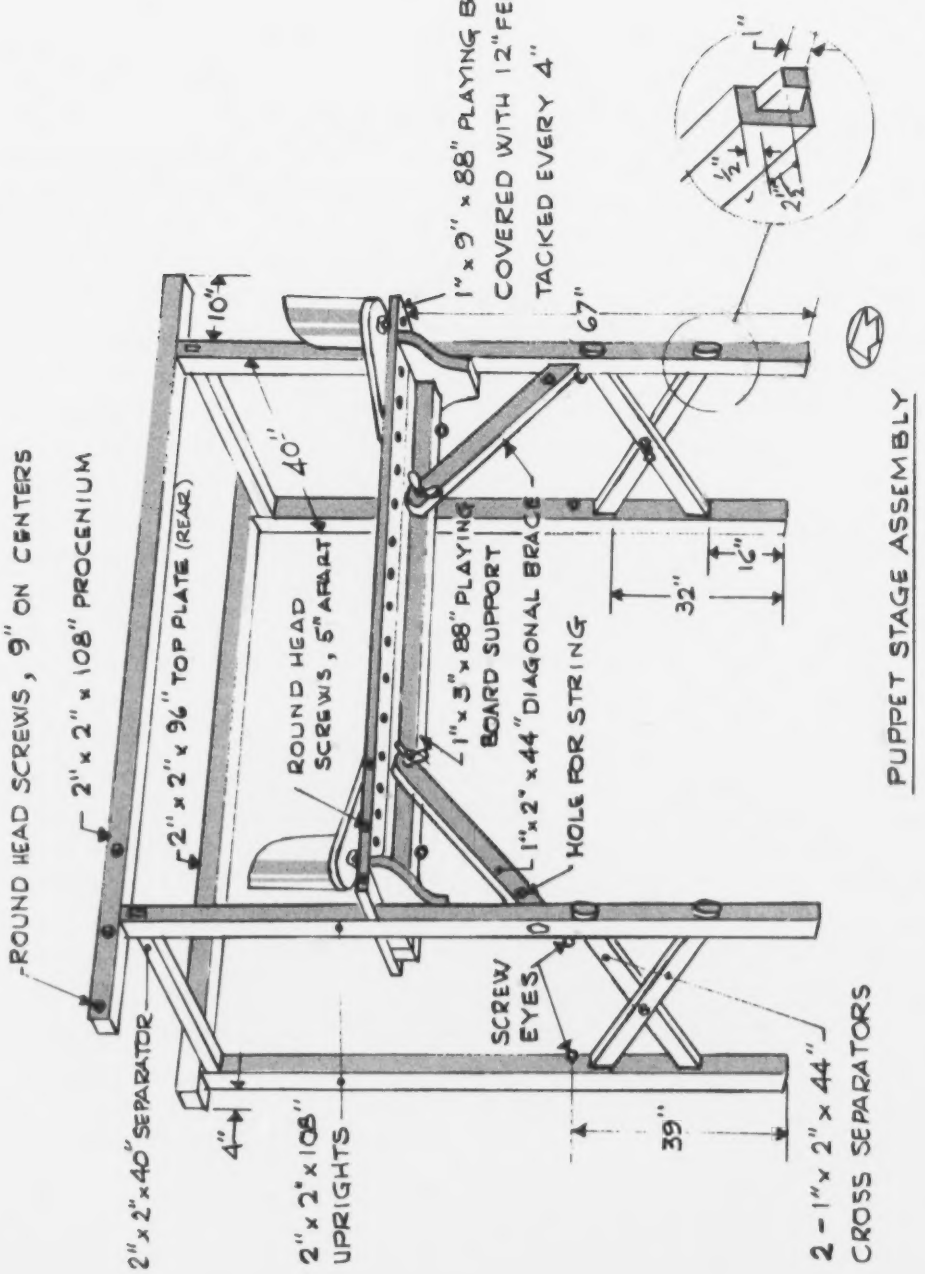
than the others, let him stand on blocks under his feet. His shoes or sandals should be blocked up with pieces of wood or cork so that he will be as tall as the others. Girl puppeteers in Hungary sometimes work with cork soles six inches high. The taller puppeteer, of course, will have to stoop a little.

The frame can be covered with whatever cloth you wish. Something fairly dark around the proscenium is usually best, so that the puppets will stand out; and behind the puppets there should be something grey or green or blue, so that the flesh colors of the puppets will stand out and contrast with the background.

The puppets operate on a playboard, that is, a board about six inches deep and the width of the stage. The playboard should be covered with felt or *khaddar*, or some kind of rough cloth that will hold things so that props will not slip off. Below the playboard at the back there is a shelf for the props that are not being used onstage. If the play is performed at night, a couple of Coleman lamps make good lighting. They can be placed on the holders attached to each corner of the stage (see drawing on page 90). If Coleman lamps are inconvenient, you could substitute battery torches–big flashlights. If electricity is available, the show can be lit with electric lights.

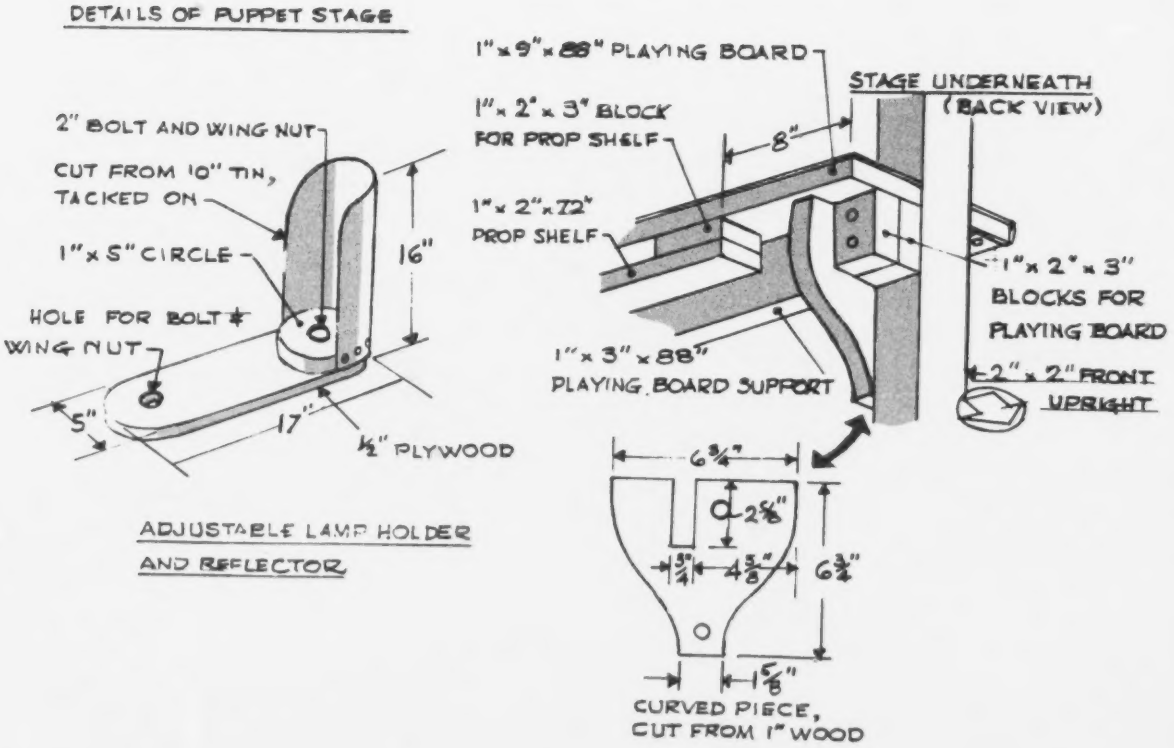
When the stage is being put together, it is easier to assemble if the frame is flat on the ground. Then the "skin," the covering cloth, should be lifted into place. Two people can set the stage up in about ten minutes; it should not take much longer than that.

When transporting the stage, the bundle of poles should be strapped together. All curtains and other cloth coverings should be folded and kept in a bag or a box to keep them clean and reasonably neat. The puppets themselves should be kept in a strong box or suitcase, as should the props, so they will be ready for the next performance.


ROUND HEAD SCREWS, 9" ON CENTERS
2" x 2" x 108" PROCENIUM
2" x 2" x 96" TOP PLATE (REAR)
10"
40"
ROUND HEAD SCREWS, 5" APART
1" x 9" x 88" PLAYING BOARD, COVERED WITH 12" FELT, TACKED EVERY 4"
67"
1" x 3" x 88" PLAYING BOARD SUPPORT
1" x 2" x 44" DIAGONAL BRACE
HOLE FOR STRING
32"
16"
SCREW EYES
2" x 2" x 40" SEPARATOR
4"
2" x 2" x 108" UPRIGHTS
39"
2 - 1" x 2" x 44" CROSS SEPARATORS
1"
1½"
2½"

PUPPET STAGE ASSEMBLY

DETAILS OF PUPPET STAGE



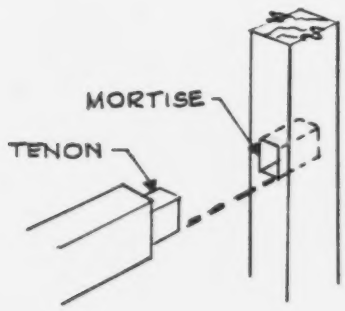
ADJUSTABLE LAMP HOLDER AND REFLECTOR

NOTE: Nail two 1" x 2" x 3" blocks for playing board to each front upright. Permanently screw curved supports to front uprights. (See details of puppet stage.)

Nail 1" x 2" x 72" prop shelf, with its 1" x 2" x 3" blocks in place, to the bottom of the 1" x 9" x 88" playing board. Then nail 1" x 3" x 88" playing board support to the playing board. This assembly then slips in and out of the curved supports that have been attached to the front uprights.

Uprights are mortised into top plates; all separators are mortised into uprights. Cross separators are joined with wing nuts and bolts where they cross each other, but are joined with mortise and tenon joints where they attach to the uprights. (See detailed drawing below.)

Diagonal braces are fastened to playing board support with 3" bolt and wing nuts. They are mortised into the uprights.



MORTISE AND TENON JOINT

PUPPET STAGE PARTS LIST

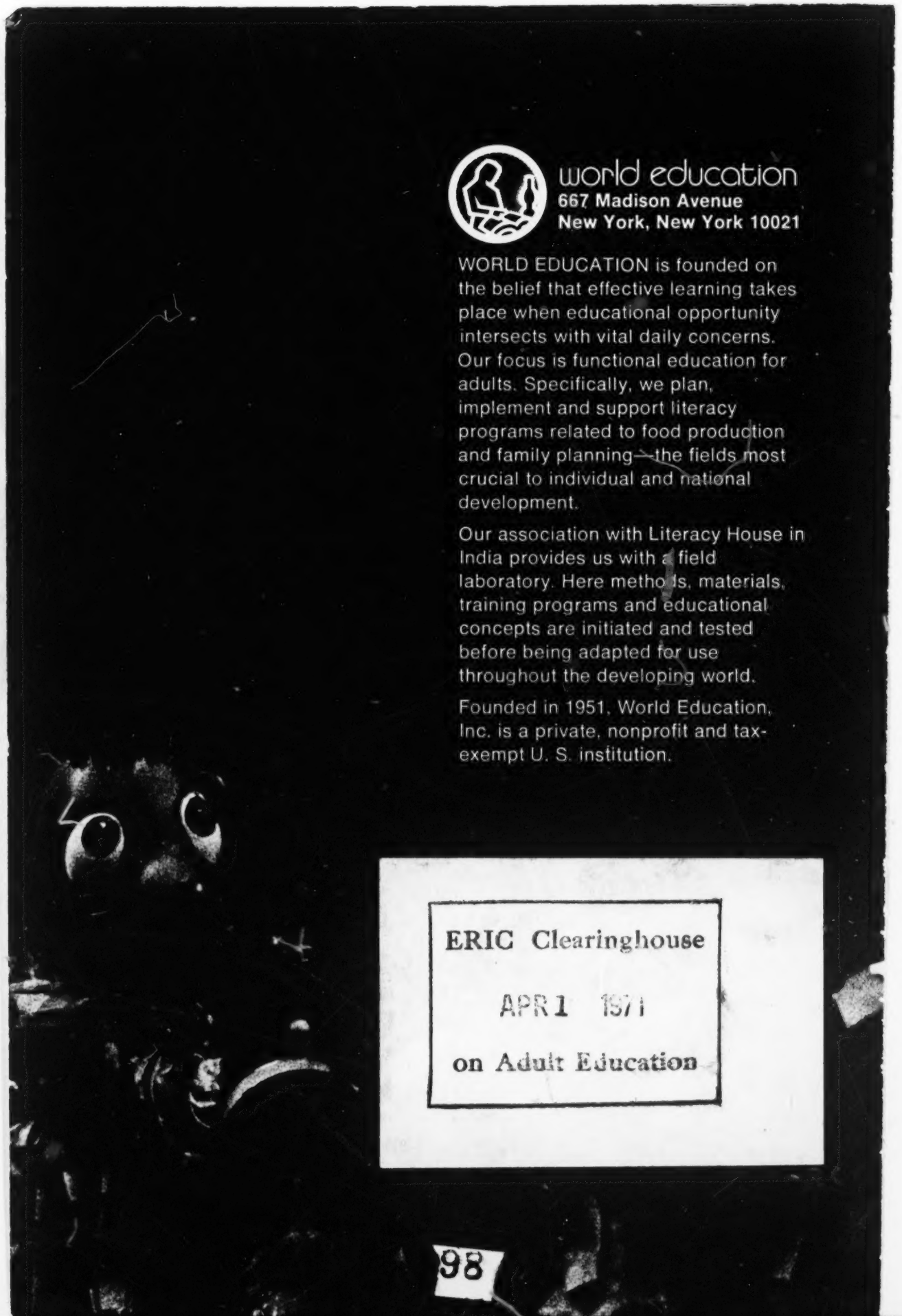
Number Required	*Name*	*Size (in inches)*	*Material*
1	Proscenium	2 x 2 x 108	wood
1	Rear top plate	2 x 2 x 96	wood
4	Uprights	2 x 2 x 108	wood
2	Separators	2 x 2 x 40	wood
2	Diagonal braces	1 x 2 x 44	wood
4	Cross separators	1 x 2 x 44	wood
1	Playing board	1 x 9 x 88	wood
1	Playing board support	1 x 3 x 88	wood
4	Blocks for playing board	1 x 2 x 3	wood
1	Prop shelf	1 x 2 x 72	wood
2	Blocks for prop shelf	1 x 2 x 3	wood
2	Curved supports for playing board	1 x 7 x 7	wood
2	Lamp holders	½ x 5 x 17	plywood
2	Lamp holder circles	1 x 5 diameter	wood
2	Lamp shields	10 x 16	tin
2	3" bolts with wing nuts		steel
6	2" bolts with wing nuts		steel
30	Roundhead wood screws		steel
6	Screw eyes for string		steel
	Nails as required		steel
	Tacks for tin and felt or cotton cloth		steel
	String for assembling		
1	Playing board covering	12 x 88	felt or rough cotton cloth
4	Flat head wood screws	2 x 1¼	steel
	Glue		
	Cloth for curtains, as required		

NOTES

Bil Baird has been a puppeteer for over a quarter of a century creating puppets and shows for theater, night clubs, films, television and commercials. As an 'ambassador of puppetry' for the United States government, he toured India, Nepal and Afghanistan in 1962, and Russia in 1963. Since 1966 the Bil Baird Theater in New York City has been operating a repertory company that produces several fully mounted marionette shows each year. Bil is also the author of a history of puppetry, **The Art of the Puppet**.

Unconventional uses of puppets have always been a primary interest of Bil's. During World War II, for example, he made films on diet and food production. He has done a series of French lessons on film, and a series of math for classroom use. Most recently, members of the company performed the televised simulations of the astronauts' flight activities, in connection with NBC's coverage of the Gemini and Apollo space programs.

A member of the board of World Education since 1966, Bil has made two trips to Literacy House in India, once to produce and test the play included here, "Small Family, Happy Family." As World Education's acitivites in the field of literacy and family planning have become more international, so have Bil's. In 1970 he held a puppeteer's workshop in Turkey and produced a family planning play at the Izmir Fair, using the famous traditional Turkish puppet character Karagoz as his leading man.



world education
667 Madison Avenue
New York, New York 10021

WORLD EDUCATION is founded on the belief that effective learning takes place when educational opportunity intersects with vital daily concerns. Our focus is functional education for adults. Specifically, we plan, implement and support literacy programs related to food production and family planning—the fields most crucial to individual and national development.

Our association with Literacy House in India provides us with a field laboratory. Here methods, materials, training programs and educational concepts are initiated and tested before being adapted for use throughout the developing world.

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